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Enhancing organizational commitment through positive attitude toward work

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to examine the impact of employees' attitudes toward work on the employees' organizational commitment. To deepen the concept of the study, literatures were reviewed. The study used a descriptive assessment and correlational research design. The population of the study are the employees of the institution where the study was conducted. Validated research questionnaires were used to gather the data. The findings indicate that employees' attitudes toward work and organizational commitment are high. The correlation analysis suggests that there is a significant correlation between employees' attitudes toward work and organizational commitment along with the two dimensions: affective and continuance commitment and there is no correlation between employees' attitudes toward work and normative organizational commitment.

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Introduction

The increasing competition among businesses compels organizations to differentiate their products and

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services to attract customers. This differentiation ultimately hinges on cultivating a competitive workforce. Many assume that building such a workforce primarily involves continuously upskilling employees with the latest knowledge, technological advancements, and skills to enhance their innovative and creative capabilities in developing new products or services (Lee et al., 2016; Idrees et al., 2022). However, succeeding in a competitive landscape is not solely about acquiring knowledge, skills, or mastering new technology—it also requires employees to exhibit positive work behavior (Youssef & Luthans, 2007; Cascio, 2006).

Employee behavior is largely shaped by their attitudes. According to Ortmeyer (1949), attitude plays a fundamental role in influencing human behavior. Ajzen (1993), Myers (2013), Perloff (2013), and Liska (1974) identify three dimensions of attitude: cognitive, affective, and conative (behavioral). These components explain that what individuals perceive (cognitive) and feel (affective) influences their behavior (conative) toward a given object of attitude. A positive attitude fosters constructive behavior, while a negative attitude leads to undesirable behavior. Consequently, altering an individual's mindset and emotions toward something is crucial in modifying their behavior toward it.

Despite its significance, attitude management remains an overlooked aspect of organizational leadership. Managers often neglect employees' attitudes as part of their concerns, yet attitudes toward work significantly impact performance (Cabrera & Estacio, 2022; Rahiman & Kodikal, 2017; Brayfield & Crockett, 1955). Enhancing employee performance necessitates improving their attitudes toward work; otherwise, organizational objectives and overall performance may suffer (Stackhouse et al., 2022). Therefore, fostering a positive work attitude is a crucial factor that requires managerial attention to strengthen employee performance and commitment.

This study aims to examine the dynamics of how employees' attitudes toward their work influence their organizational commitment. Given the absence of existing studies on this specific relationship, this research seeks to bridge the gap. The findings will provide valuable insights for management to recognize the importance of employees' attitudes and behaviors in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.

The study is structured into several sections: introduction, literature review, research methodology, data presentation, results and discussion, and conclusion.

Literature review

The literature review aims to deepen understanding of the subject by drawing from past research and establishing relevant theories. It provides a foundation for the study by identifying key concepts and guiding the investigation. To ensure coherence, the review will be organized thematically.

The concept of attitude and attitude toward work and its effect on work performance

Understanding attitude is essential to examining its impact on work. Merriam-Webster defines attitude

as a "mental position" and "feeling" toward a fact or state, highlighting its cognitive and emotional components. The Cambridge Dictionary expands on this by including behavior as an integral part of attitude, reinforcing the idea that thoughts and emotions drive actions. Rooted in social psychology, attitude has been a longstanding subject of study. Allport (1935) emphasized its centrality, defining it as a mental and neural state shaped by experience that influences responses to people, objects, or events. Similarly, Thurstone (1929) described attitude as an individual's inclinations, biases, and convictions, underscoring its role in shaping behavior (Baysal & Tekarslan, 1996).

Titchener (1910), as cited by Ortmeyer (1949), suggested that attitude may not always be conscious but manifests through sensations, images, and feelings, which ultimately drive behavior. Koffka (1935) viewed it as a force directed toward an object, while Dewey (1922) described it as an acquired tendency leading to action. Ajzen (1993), Myers (2013), Perloff (2013), and Liska (1974) further categorized attitude into cognitive (beliefs), affective (emotions), and conative (behavioral intentions) dimensions.

Attitude toward work follows the same psychological principles. Aries and Rizqi (2013) defined it as employees' feelings, emotions, and beliefs about their work and environment. Önal (2015), as cited by Akcay et al. (2016), described it as an individual's evaluation of their job, while Ajzen (1993) and others emphasized its cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. The response to work—whether positive or negative—is shaped by personal experiences and directly influences performance (Abun et al., 2021).

Studies confirm the connection between attitude toward work and job performance. Abun et al. (2021) found a strong correlation, while Abdalkrim and Elhalim (2016) highlighted its impact on job satisfaction. Akcay et al. (2016) also noted that employee attitudes significantly affect work outcomes. Improving attitudes can enhance job satisfaction, commitment, and retention while reducing turnover (Borst et al., 2020). Menon and Priyadarshini (2018) emphasized the need to transform negative attitudes to improve performance, while Almeida et al. (2012) found that a positive work attitude boosts productivity. Given these insights, organizations must actively foster positive attitudes among employees to drive performance and commitment.

Organizational commitment

The concept of commitment and organizational commitment varies among researchers, with different dictionaries also providing distinct definitions. The Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.) defines commitment as the "willingness to give your time and energy to a job, activity, or something that you believe in." Meanwhile, Dictionary.com, based on Oxford Languages, describes it as "the state or quality of being dedicated to a cause, activity, or an engagement or obligation that restricts freedom of action." These definitions are closely related, as both emphasize dedication of time and energy to a cause or activity. Similarly, the Britannica Dictionary defines commitment as "a promise to do or give something or a promise to be loyal to someone or something." However, these definitions lack the psychological dimensions that are integral to the concept of commitment.

Various scholars provide definitions that incorporate psychological aspects. Leonard (2009) describes commitment as "a state of mind that holds people and organizations in the line of behavior." This definition underscores the idea that commitment is not merely about dedicating time and energy but also about forming a psychological contract with an institution. Employees invest their time and energy because of their emotional attachment to the organization, which encompasses psychological forces binding individuals to their actions. Ajayi and Muraina (2016) further reinforce this view, defining commitment as "the extent to which an individual identifies himself/herself with the object of the organization in which he works." Ceylan (2020) similarly describes it as "separating your time and interest by taking responsibility for your wishes and beliefs for the person, organization, or work you are affiliated with." These definitions highlight three key aspects of commitment: emotional attachment to the organization, self-identification with it, and dedication of time and interest.

The emotional dimension of commitment is further developed in Meyer and Allen's (1991) definition, which describes it as "a psychological state that (a) characterizes the employee's relationship with the organization, and (b) has implications for the decision to continue or discontinue membership in the organization." Their definition strengthens the affective element of commitment, aligning with the perspective of Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974), who define organizational commitment as "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (p. 604). Scholars generally agree on viewing organizational commitment from a psychological perspective, as evidenced by Idris and Manganaro (2017), who define it as "the extent to which individuals psychologically identify with their work organization." This idea echoes the viewpoint of Porter and Lawler (1965), as cited by Herrera and Heras-Rosas (2021), who saw organizational commitment as employees' willingness to make significant efforts for the institution and remain loyal to its objectives and values. Greenberg and Baron (2008) encapsulate this by defining commitment as the degree to which employees identify with and demonstrate dedication to their organization.

Organizational commitment fundamentally represents a psychological contract between individuals and their organizations. Rousseau (1995) explains that a psychological contract consists of personal beliefs about the reciprocal obligations and benefits within an exchange relationship. This exchange relationship between employee and organization manifests in two key dimensions: relational contracts and transactional contracts (MacNeil, 1985). In relational contracts, employees engage in emotional exchanges and demonstrate loyalty based on expectations, such as promotions or permanent positions. Employees develop psychological contracts with organizations under the assumption that their loyalty will be rewarded. In contrast, transactional contracts are motivated by economic exchanges (Rousseau, 1995), where employees remain with an organization as long as salaries and benefits meet their expectations. Research has extensively examined the effects of organizational commitment on individual behavior. Studies by Fischer and Mansell (2009), Mathieu and Zajac (1990), Meyer et al. (2002), and Solinger et al. (2008) confirm that organizational commitment strongly correlates with occupational commitment, job satisfaction, and job involvement. Employees with higher levels of organizational commitment are less likely to leave their organizations, have lower absenteeism rates, and demonstrate organizational citizenship behaviors while experiencing improved

well- being (Angle & Perry, 1981; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al., 2002; Solinger et al., 2008). These findings emphasize the significance of fostering strong organizational commitment to enhance employee retention, engagement, and overall job performance.

Dimensions of organizational commitment: Affective, continuance and normative commitment

Scholars widely agree that organizational commitment is not a singular or uni-dimensional concept but rather a multidimensional construct. It comprises various dimensions, including attitudinal, behavioral, and motivational aspects. Morrow (1993) identified two key dimensions: attitude and behavior. Miller (2003) described attitude as an evaluative judgment—either positive or negative—toward an organization, reflecting feelings of attachment, identification, and loyalty (Morrow, 1993). This perspective aligns with Meyer, Allen, and Gellatly (1990), who argued that attitude embodies both cognitive and affective judgments about an organization. Furthermore, Ajzen (1993) asserted that attitude ultimately manifests in behavior, meaning a person's mindset influences their actions. Best (1994) emphasized that organizational commitment is evident in individuals who diligently perform their tasks, while Reicher (1985) noted that such commitment is particularly visible when employees are dedicated to their workplace groups. This psychological bond fosters active participation in organizational programs and activities, a concept further elaborated by O'Reilly (1989), who described organizational commitment as a psychological attachment characterized by job involvement, loyalty, and belief in the organization's values. Miller and Lee (2001) reinforced this view, highlighting that employees demonstrate commitment through their acceptance of organizational goals and willingness to exert effort on behalf of the institution.

Building on this foundational concept, scholars have proposed multiple dimensions of organizational commitment, often with overlapping elements. Meyer and Allen (1997) introduced three key dimensions: affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Affective commitment reflects an employee’s emotional attachment to an organization, arising when their personal values and priorities align with the company’s mission (Lowry, 1973). This emotional bond fosters active participation and effort, as noted by Johnson and Chang (2006), who found that employees with high affective commitment are more likely to contribute positively to their organization. Empirical evidence from Becker et al. (1996) and Meyer et al. (2004) suggests that affective commitment enhances intrinsic motivation and strengthens an employee's desire to remain loyal to the organization.

The second dimension, continuance commitment, emerges when individuals weigh the costs and benefits of leaving an institution. Employees remain with an organization when they perceive that staying offers greater advantages than leaving. This decision-making process is driven by considerations such as personal investment and limited employment alternatives (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1984). Becker (1960) further explained that employees maintain their commitment due to the perceived benefits associated with continued employment.

Normative commitment, the third dimension, refers to an employee's sense of moral and legal obligation to their organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Loyalty in this context is rooted in an ethical

duty to fulfill contractual responsibilities. Muhammad, Afridi, Ali, Shah, and Alasan (2021) noted that when employees perceive staying as the morally and legally correct decision, they are more likely to remain with the organization.

Other scholars have introduced additional dimensions of commitment that align with those proposed by Meyer and Allen (1997). O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) identified three dimensions: compliance, identification, and internalization. Identification and internalization closely resemble affective commitment, as they capture an employee's emotional attachment, sense of belonging, and alignment with organizational goals. Compliance, on the other hand, pertains to the relationship between employee contributions and extrinsic rewards, aligning with continuance commitment, where economic considerations influence an employee's decision to stay. Similarly, Balfour and Wechsler (1996) proposed three dimensions: identification, affiliation, and exchange. Identification represents an employee's pride in their organization, corresponding to affective commitment. Affiliation reflects a sense of belonging and attachment to both coworkers and the organization, further reinforcing affective commitment. Exchange commitment occurs when employees feel recognized for their efforts through tangible benefits, mirroring the principles of continuance commitment outlined by Meyer and Allen (1997).

The dimensions proposed by O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) and Wechsler and Balfour (1996) closely align with Meyer and Allen's (1997) framework. Given this alignment, this study adopts Meyer and Allen's (1997) three-dimensional model—affective, continuance, and normative commitment—as the foundation for investigating organizational commitment.

Research questions

The study aims to investigate the interplay of attitude toward work and organizational commitment. It seeks specifically the following questions:

1. **What is the attitude of employees toward work in terms of:**
   a. **Cognitive attitude**
   b. **Affective attitude**

2. **What is the organizational commitment of employees along with:**
   a. **Affective commitment**
   b. **Continuance commitment**
   c. **Normative commitment**

3. **Is there a relationship between attitude toward work and organizational commitment?**

Hypothesis

Human attitudes toward various aspects of life significantly shape their behaviors toward those subjects. A positive attitude fosters engagement and dedication, while a negative attitude may lead to disengagement or resistance. This study hypothesizes that employees' attitudes toward their work

directly influence their level of organizational commitment.

Scope and delimitation

This study focuses on employees' attitudes toward work, specifically examining cognitive and affective attitudes, and their relationship with organizational commitment, which includes affective, continuance, and normative commitment. The research is confined to employees of Divine Word College of Laoag.

Research methodology

This quantitative study employs a descriptive assessment and correlational research design. Data is collected through questionnaires administered to employees of Divine Word College of Laoag. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses are applied, utilizing weighted mean and Pearson's r to interpret the data.

To facilitate data collection, the researcher sought formal approval from the institution's President for the distribution of questionnaires. Data collection was conducted through employee representatives. Given that the study does not involve sensitive human issues, the ethical review was waived.

The following value ranges and their corresponding descriptive interpretations were used:

Statistical Range	***Descriptive Interpretation***
4.21-5.00	*Strongly Agree/Very High*
3.41-4.20	*Agree/High*
2.61-3.40	*Somewhat Agree/Moderate*
1.81-2.60	*Disagree/Low*
1.00-1.80	*Strongly Disagree/Very Low*

Data presentation and analysis

1. ***What is the attitude of employees toward work in terms of:***
   - ***a. Cognitive attitude***
   - ***b. Affective attitude***

Table 1: Attitude of employees toward work in terms of cognitive and affective attitude

Indicator	Mean	DI
Cognitive attitude		
I know my work	4.06	High
I believe that I can perform my work easily	3.92	High
I have been in the work for quite some time	3.87	High
I am familiar with all the details of my work	3.89	High
I have the skills to carry out my work	3.91	High
I can carry out my work without the help of others	3.73	High
Composite Mean	**3.90**	**High**

Affective attitude		
I am happy with my work	3.87	High
I am always eager to show up for work	3.81	High
My work gives me satisfaction	3.84	High
I feel good because I can perform my work	3.88	High
My work is important to me	3.93	High
My work gives me a sense of meaning	3.97	High
Composite Mean	**3.88**	**High**
Overall Mean	***3.98***	***High***

Source: Rosenberg and Hovland (1960)

Legend:

Statistical Range	***Descriptive Interpretation***
4.21-5.00	*Strongly Agree/Very High*
3.41-4.20	*Agree/High*
2.61-3.40	*Somewhat Agree/Moderate*
1.81-2.60	*Disagree/Low*
1.00-1.80	*Strongly Disagree/Very Low*

Based on the data in the table, the overall attitude of employees toward work, including both cognitive and affective dimensions, received a mean rating of 3.98, which is interpreted as "agree/high." This rating suggests that employees' attitudes toward work are not extremely high, nor are they low, moderate, or very low, but rather consistently high. Even when examined separately, both cognitive and affective attitudes fall within the same level, with mean ratings of
3.90 and 3.88, respectively.

Regarding cognitive attitude toward work, employees agree that they can perform their tasks with ease due to their experience. They acknowledge that they are familiar with their work and possess the necessary skills to carry it out independently. Abun et al. (2021) highlighted that a strong cognitive attitude toward work enhances employees' self-efficacy in performing their duties.

Similarly, in terms of affective attitude, employees express happiness and satisfaction with their work. This positive sentiment encourages them to show up consistently, as they perceive their work as meaningful and significant in their lives. Abun et al. (2021) further found that a strong affective attitude toward work motivates employees to enhance their performance.

2. ***What is the organizational commitment of employees along with:***
   a. ***Affective commitment***
   b. ***Continuance commitment***
   c. ***Normative commitment***

Table 2: Organizational commitment.

Indicator	Mean	DI
Affective commitment		
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization	3.89	High
I feel as if this organization's problems are my own	3.75	High
I feel like 'part of my family at this organization	3.71	High
I feel 'emotionally attached to this organization	3.73	High
This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	3.88	High
I feel a strong sense of belonging to this organization	3.67	High
Composite Mean	**3.77**	**High**
Continuance commitment		
It would be very hard for me to leave my job at this organization right now even if I wanted to	3.74	High
Too much of my life would be disrupted if I left my organization	3.48	High
Right now, staying with my job at this organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire	3.64	High
I believe I have too few options to consider leaving this organization	3.63	High
One of the few negative consequences of leaving my job at this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives elsewhere.	3.56	High
One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice	3.69	High
Composite Mean	**3.62**	**High**
Normative commitment		
I must remain with my organization.	3.64	High
Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave.	3.50	High
I would feel guilty if I left this organization now	3.62	High
This organization deserves my loyalty	3.73	High
I would not leave my organization right now because of my sense of obligation to it	3.74	High
I owe a great deal to this organization.	3.84	High
Composite Mean	**3.68**	**High**
Overall Mean	**3.69**	**High**

Source: ***Meyer and Allen (1997).***

The data in the table reveal that employees' overall organizational commitment, encompassing affective, continuance, and normative commitment, received a mean rating of 3.69, interpreted as "agree/high." This rating suggests that while employees' commitment is not exceptionally high, it is consistently strong, rather than moderate or low. Even when examined individually, the three dimensions—affective (3.77), continuance (3.62), and normative (3.68) commitment—remain within the same high range.

Regarding affective commitment, employees express a strong emotional attachment to the institution,

stating that they would be happy to spend the rest of their careers there. This sense of belonging reinforces their view of the institution as part of their family, as it provides meaning to their lives. Sinaga et al. (2019) highlighted that affective commitment enhances employees' ability to observe and analyze work-related issues more effectively.

In terms of continuance commitment, employees acknowledge that leaving their job would be challenging, even if they desired to do so, as it would significantly disrupt their lives. Their decision to stay is driven by necessity and the scarcity of alternative opportunities. Khan et al. (2016) and Kasoge (2019) found that high continuance commitment positively influences job performance and satisfaction.

Regarding normative commitment, employees agree that they feel a moral obligation to remain with the institution, even if leaving would be personally beneficial. Additionally, they experience a sense of guilt at the thought of leaving, as they believe they owe loyalty to the organization. While both affective and continuance commitment positively impact job performance and satisfaction, normative commitment does not have a significant effect on job performance (Igbomor & Ogbuma, 2024).

Problem 3. Is there a relationship between attitude toward work and organizational commitment?

Table 3: Correlation

		Affective commitment	Continuance commitment	Normative commitment	Overall commitment
Cognitive attitude	Pearson Correlation	.416**	.351**	.041	.331**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.610	.000
Affective attitude	Pearson Correlation	.321**	.396**	.035	.312**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.658	.000
Overall attitude	Pearson Correlation	.393**	.400**	.041	.343**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.611	.000

**p<0.01

The table provides the correlation analysis between attitude toward work and organizational commitment.

The findings reveal a compelling and statistically significant positive relationship between employees' attitude toward work and their organizational commitment (r=0.343, p<.01). This suggests that individuals who maintain a more positive outlook on their work tend to demonstrate stronger commitment to their organization.

Delving deeper into the components of work attitudes, both cognitive and affective dimensions exhibit meaningful connections with specific aspects of organizational commitment. Notably, cognitive attitude toward work shows a significant positive correlation with affective commitment (r=0.321, p<.01) and continuance commitment (r=0.416, p<.01). Similarly, affective attitude toward work strongly correlates with both affective commitment (r=0.396, p<.01) and continuance commitment

($r=0.351$, $p<.01$). These findings suggest that employees who possess a strong understanding of their work and feel emotionally engaged in their roles are more likely to develop deep emotional ties to the organization and remain committed due to the perceived costs of leaving.

Interestingly, the normative component of organizational commitment does not exhibit any significant relationship with either the cognitive or affective aspects of attitude toward work, nor with overall attitude. The correlation values for normative commitment range from 0.041 to 0.035, with p-values exceeding .05. This indicates that an employee's sense of moral duty or obligation to stay with the organization is not necessarily shaped by their cognitive understanding or emotional connection to their work.

In essence, while cognitive and affective attitudes toward work are key drivers of affective and continuance commitment, normative commitment appears to function independently. This nuanced interplay underscores the multidimensional nature of organizational commitment, emphasizing that different factors influence employees' dedication to their organization in distinct ways.

Result and discussions

Organizational performance is inherently linked to various workforce factors, extending beyond salaries, incentives, and benefits. While these aspects can motivate employees to work harder, true organizational success is deeply rooted in their commitment—particularly organizational commitment, as emphasized by Stackhouse et al. (2022). Research consistently highlights that employees' level of commitment directly impacts organizational performance (Stackhouse et al., 2022; Meyer et al., 1989; Yousef, 2000).

This commitment, however, is not solely driven by financial compensation or workplace treatment; it is also shaped by employees' attitudes toward their work. The findings of the current study reveal that cognitive and affective attitudes toward work significantly influence organizational commitment, particularly affective and continuance commitment. In other words, the more employees understand their work, find fulfillment in it, and develop a sense of passion, the stronger their emotional attachment to the institution and willingness to remain.

For management, this underscores a critical responsibility: fostering a work environment where employees can thrive. Investing in continuous training and development to enhance employees' knowledge and skills, while simultaneously providing strong leadership and essential resources, creates a workplace culture where employees not only excel in their roles but also genuinely love their work. By prioritizing these elements, organizations can cultivate a workforce that is not just productive but deeply committed to the institution's long-term success.

Conclusion

This study explored the impact of employees' attitudes toward work on their organizational commitment. The findings reveal that employees exhibit a high level of both cognitive and affective

attitudes toward their work, alongside a strong sense of organizational commitment. Moreover, correlation analysis confirms a significant relationship between these factors, underscoring that fostering organizational commitment begins with enhancing employees' cognitive and affective attitudes toward their work. This insight highlights the importance of creating a work environment that not only develops employees' knowledge and skills but also nurtures their passion and emotional connection to their roles.

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